

Learning Activity 7.3

Negotiating for sexual harassment to be included in occupational safety and health policies

Overview

This activity is based on a scenario of gender-based violence in a factory in the context of women's sexual and reproductive health.

Suggested time

60-90 minutes

Target groups

- Stakeholders involved in developing and implementing workplace gender-based violence programmes
- Programme managers, factory/farm managers and supervisors.
- People responsible for health and safety at work.
- Representatives from employers and trade unions.
- Representatives from NGOs and women's organizations.

Aims

- To consider gender-based violence in the context of occupational safety and health.
- Appreciate how women's sexual and reproductive health can be adversely affected by workplace rules and production pressures.

Preparation

- Prepare the activity by collecting sources of information for the group work session, including relevant case studies.
- Provide contextual information and tips about the issues that can be discussed.
- Elaborate a version of the scenario in the hand-out which may be appropriate to the group, if needed.

Setting

A room large enough to accommodate several groups.

Materials

- Flip charts or post-it cards
- Markers
- Tape (if needed)

Time/Steps

Step 1: Preparation (suggested time: 15 minutes)

Read or distribute printed copies of the scenario below.

Scenario

A group of factory workers have been involved in a community women's health project. The project had made them think about the factory where they worked and they had come to realize that many aspects of their working lives affected their own sexual and reproductive health. These include the following:

- Strict limits on the number of times they were allowed to go to the toilet, which meant that the women suffered from debilitating urinary complaints such as cystitis;
- In order to reduce the number of times they needed to use the toilet, many of the women drank less water and became dehydrated;
- Workers going home after late shifts had to wait to be picked up by private (unregulated) transport in an unlit area outside the work gates - several women have been raped or harassed nearby, while waiting for buses or taxis.

Step 2: Separate small group discussions (suggested time: 45 minutes)

Split participants into two groups.

One group will analyze health-related issues, the second one will consider safety issues for workers. In both cases, participants will start discussing the problems highlighted in the scenario. Then, they will brainstorm on other problems which may arise in different types of firms or plants or farms, setting out the arguments and agreeing a workable solution to each problem.

Step 3: Plenary discussion (suggested time: 30 minutes)

Each group will provide a five-minute report back on the outcome of their discussions. Hold a discussion about the different solutions proposed and how they can be included in future occupational safety and health policies.

How to adapt it

- The activity can be run as a shorter discussion based activity (in plenary or small groups), using Steps 1 and 2 of the task.
- If participants have literacy difficulties, read out or summarise the text.
- The activity can be adapted to different sectors or groups of learners.

Tips

- The final plenary session is an opportunity to examine ways to resolve the challenges. Aim to emphasise the role played by the different stakeholders, the arguments that each will make, and how challenges can be overcome.

Resources

Paper copy of the scenario.